The True Religion of God

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Which Is The True Religion Of God?

Each person is born in a circumstance which is not of his own choosing. The religion of his family or the ideology of the state is thrust upon him from the very beginning of his existence in this world. By the time he reaches his teens, he is usually fully brain-washed into believing that the beliefs of his particular society are the correct beliefs that everyone should have. However, when some people mature and are exposed to other belief-systems, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. The seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion upon realizing that each and every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claims to be the one and only correct way for man. Indeed, they all encourage people to do good. So, which one is right? They cannot all be right since each claims all others are wrong. Then how does the seeker of truth choose the right way?

God gave us all minds and intellects to enable us to make this crucial decision. It is the most important decision in the life of a human being. Upon it depends his future, Consequently, each and every one of us must examine dispassionately the evidence presented and choose what appears to be right until further evidence arises.

Like every other religion or philosophy, Islam also claims to be the one and only true way to God. In this respect it is no different from other systems. This booklet intends to provide some evidence for the validity of that claim. However, it must always be kept in mind that one can only determine the true path by putting aside emotions and prejudices, which often blind us to reality. Then, and only then, will we be able to use our God-given intelligence and make a rational and correct decision.

There are several arguments, which may be advanced to support Islam's claim to be the true religion of God. The following are only three of the most obvious. The first argument is based on the divine origin of the names of the religion and the comprehensiveness of its meaning. The second deals with the unique and uncomplicated teachings concerning the relationship between God, man, and creation. The third argument derives from the fact that Islam is universally attainable by all men at all times. These are the three basic components of what logic and reason dictate necessary for a religion to be considered the true religion of God. The following pages will develop these concepts in some detail.

The Religion's Name

The first thing that one should know and clearly understand about Islam is what the word 'Islam" itself means. The Arabic word "Islam" means the submission or surrender of one's will to the only true God, known in Arabic as "Allah". One who submits his will to God is termed in Arabic a "Muslim". The religion of Islam is not named after a person or a people, nor was it decided by a later generation of man, as in the case of Christianity which was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, Marxism after Karl Marx, Judaism after the tribe of Judah and Hinduism after the Hindus. Islam (submission to the will of God) is the religion which was given to Adam, the first man and the first prophet of God, and it was the religion of all the prophets sent by Allah to mankind. Further its name was chosen by God Himself and clearly mentioned in the final scripture which He revealed to man. In that final revelation, called in Arabic the Qur'an Allah states the following:

> **"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." [Qur'an 5:3]**
>
> **"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of Him." [Qur'an 3:85]**

Hence, Islam does not claim to be a new religion brought by Prophet Mohammed into Arabia in the seventh century, but rather to be a re-expression in its final form of the true religion of Almighty God, Allah, as it was originally revealed to Adam and subsequent prophets.

At this point we might comment briefly on two other religions that claim to be the true path. Nowhere in the Bible will you find God revealing to Prophet Moses' people or their descendants that their religion is called Judaism, or to the followers of Christ that their religion is called Christianity. In other words, the names "Judaism" and "Christianity" had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after his departure that the name Christianity was given to Jesus' religion.

What, then, was Jesus' religion in actual fact, as distinct from its name? (Both the name Jesus and the name Christ are derived from Hebrew words, through Greek and Latin. Jesus is the English and Latin form of the Greek Iesous, which in Hebrew Is Yeshua or Yehoshua' (Joshua). The Greek word Christos is a translation of the Hebrew [for] 'messiah', which is a title meaning 'the anointed'.) His religion was reflected in his teachings, which he urged his followers to accept as guiding principles in their relationship with God. In Islam, Jesus is a prophet sent by Allah and his Arabic name is Eesa. Like the prophets before him, he called upon the people to surrender their will to the will of God (which is what Islam stands for). For example, in the New Testament it is stated that Jesus taught his followers to pray to God as follows:

> "Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." [Luke 11:2/Matthew 6:9-10]

This concept was emphasised by Jesus in a number of his statements recorded in the Gospels. He taught, for example, that only those who submitted would inherit paradise. Jesus also pointed out that he himself submitted to the will of God.

> "None of those who call me 'Lord' will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." [Matthew 7:21]
>
> "I cannot do anything of myself I judge as I hear and my judgment is honest because I am not seeking my own will but the will of Him who sent me." [John 5:30]

There are many reports in the Gospels which show that Jesus made it clear to his followers that he was not the one true God. For example, when speaking about the final Hour, he said:

> "No-one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not the son, but only the Father." [Mark 13:32]

Thus, Jesus like the prophets before him and the one who came after him, taught the religion of Islam: **submission to the will of the one true God.**

God And Creation

Since the total submission of one's will to God represents the essence of worship, the basic message of God's divine religion, Islam, is the worship of God alone. It also requires the avoidance of worship directed to any person, place or thing other than God. Since everything other than God, the creator of all the things, is God's creation, it may be said that Islam, in essence, calls man away from worship of creation and invites him to worship only his Creator. He is the only one deserving of man's worship, because it is only by His will that prayers are answered.

Accordingly, if a man prays to a tree and his prayers are answered, it is not the tree which answers his prayers but God, who allows the circumstances prayed for to take place. One might say, "That is obvious". However, to tree-worshippers, it might not be so. Similarly, prayers to Jesus, Buddha, or Krishna or Saint Christopher, or Saint Jude or even to Muhammad, are not answered by them, but are answered by God. Jesus did not tell his followers to worship him but to worship God, as the Quran states:

> **"And behold! Allah will say: 'O Jesus, the son of Mary! Did you say to men, worship me and my mother as gods besides Allah?, He will say: "Glory to you, I could never say what I had no right (to say)." [Qur'an 5:118]**

Nor did Jesus worship himself when he worshipped, but rather he worshipped God. And Jesus was reported in the Gospels to have said,

> "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" [Luke 4:8]

This basic principle is contained in the opening chapter of the Qur'an, known as Soorah al-Faatihah, verse 4:

> **"you alone do we worship and from you alone do we seek help."**

Elsewhere, in the final book of revelation, the Quran, God also said:

> **"And you Lord says: 'Call on Me and I will answer your (prayer).'" [Qur'an 40:60]**

It is worth emphasizing that the basic message of Islam (namely, the worship of God alone) also proclaims that God and His creation are distinctly different entities. God is neither equal to His creation nor a part of it, nor is His creation equal to Him or a part of Him.

This might seem obvious, but man's worship of creation, instead of the Creator is to a large degree based on ignorance, or neglect, of this concept. It is the belief that the essence of God is everywhere in His creation or that His divine being is or was present in some parts of His creation, which has provided justification for the worship of God's creation and naming it the worship of God. However, the message of Islam, as brought by the prophets of God, is to worship only God and to avoid the worship of His creation either directly or indirectly.

In the Qur'an God clearly states:

> **"For we assuredly sent amongst every people a prophet, with the command Worship Me and avoid false Gods." [Qur'an 16:36]**

When idol worshippers are questioned as to why they bow down to idols created by men, the invariable reply is that they are not actually worshipping the stone image, but God who is present within it. They claim that the stone idol is only a focal point for God's essence and is not in itself God! One who has accepted the concept of God being present in any way within His creation will be obliged to accept this argument for idolatry. Whereas, one who understands the basic message of Islam and its implications would never agree to idolatry no matter how it is rationalized.

Those who have claimed divinity for themselves down through the ages have often based their claims on the mistaken belief that God is present in man. Taking one step further, they claim that God is more present in them than in the rest of us, and that other humans should

therefore submit to them and worship them as God in person or as God concentrated within their persons. Similarly, those who have asserted the godhood of others after their deaths have found fertile ground among those who accept the false belief of God's presence in man.

It should be abundantly clear by now that one who has grasped the basic message of Islam and its implications could never agree to worship another human being under any circumstance. God's religion, in essence, is a clear call to the worship of the Creator and the rejection of creation-worship in any form. This is the meaning of the motto of Islam:

"Laa Ilaaha Ill Allah" (there is no God but Allah)

The sincere declaration of this phrase and the acceptance of prophethood automatically bring one within the fold of Islam, and sincere belief in it guarantees one Paradise. Thus, the final Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h) is reported to have said, **"Any one who says: There is no God but Allah, and dies holding that (belief) will enter paradise."**

Belief in this declaration of faith requires that one submit his/her will to God in the way taught by the prophets of God. It also requires the believer to give up the worship of false gods.

The Message Of False Religions

There are so many sects, cults, religions, philosophies, and movements in the world, all of which claim to be the right way or the only true path of God How can one determine which one is correct or whether, in fact, all are correct? One method by which the answer can be found is to clear away the superficial differences in the teachings of the various claimants to the ultimate truth, and identifies the central object of worship upon which they call, directly or indirectly. False religions all have in common one basic concept with regard to God they either claim that all men are gods, or that specific men were God, or that nature is God, or that God is a figment of man's imagination.

Thus, it may be stated that the basic message of false religion is that God may be worshipped in the form of His creation. False religions invite man to the worship of creation by calling the creation or some aspect of it God. For example, prophet Jesus invited his followers to worship God, but those who claim to be Jesus' followers today call people to worship Jesus, claiming that he was God.

Buddha was a reformer who introduced a number of humanistic principles in the religion of India. He did not claim to be God, nor did he suggest to his followers that he be an object of worship. Yet today most Buddhists who are to be found outside of India have taken him to be God and they prostrate themselves to idols made in their perception of his likeness.

By using the principle of identifying the object of worship, we can easily detect false religions and the contrived nature of their origin. As God said in the Qur'an:

> **"That which you worship besides Him are only names and you and your forefathers have invented for which Allah has sent down no authority: the command belongs only to Allah He has command that you worship Him; that is the right religion, but most men do not understand." [Qur'an 12:40]**

It may be argued that all religions teach good things, so why should it matter which one we follow? The reply is that all false religions teach the greatest evil the worship of creation. Creation-worship is the greatest sin that man can commit because it contradicts the very purpose of his creation. Man was created to worship God alone as Allah has explicitly stated in the Qur'an:

> **"I have only created jinns and men, that they may worship Me" [Qur'an 51:56]**

Consequently , the worship of creation, which is the essence of idolatry is the only unforgivable sin. One who dies in this state of idolatry, has sealed his fate in the next life. This is not an opinion, but a revealed fact stated by God in his final revelation to man:

> **"Verily Allah will not forgive the joining of partners with Him, but He may forgive (sins) less than that for whomsoever He wishes." [Qur'an 4:48 and 116]**

Universality Of God's Religion

Since the consequences of following a false religion are so grave, the true religion of God must have been universally understandable and universally attainable in the past and it must continue eternally to be understandable and attainable throughout the entire world. In other words, the true religion of God cannot be confined to any one people, place, or period of time. Nor is it logical that such a religion should impose conditions that have nothing to do with the relationship of man with God, such as baptism, or belief in man as a savior, or an intermediary. Within the central principle of Islam and its definition (the surrender of one's will to God) lie the roots of Islam's universality. Whenever man comes to the realization that God is one and distinct from His creation, and submits himself to God, he becomes a Muslim in body and spirit and is eligible for paradise.

Consequently, anyone at any time in the most remote regions of the world can become Muslim, a follower of God's religion, Islam, by merely rejecting the worship of creation and turning to God alone. It should be noted, however, that in order to actually submit to God's will, one must continually choose between right and wrong. Indeed, man is endowed by God with the power not only to distinguish right from wrong but also to choose between them. These God-given powers carry with them an important responsibility, namely, that man is answerable to God for the choices he makes. It follows, then, that man should try his utmost to do good and avoid evil. These concepts are expressed in the final revelation as follows:

> **"Verily, those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Christians, and the Sabians (angel-and-star-worshippers) -- any of these who believe in Allah and the Last Day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord. They will not be overcome by fear or grief." [Qur'an 2:62]**

If, for whatever reason, they fail to accept the final message after it has been clearly explained to them, they will be in grave danger. The last Prophet said:

> *"Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me but does not affirm his belief in what I brought and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of hell." (Sahih Muslim [English Translation], Vol.1 P.91 No, 284)*

Recognition Of God

The question which arises here is : How can all people be expected to believe in the one true God, given their varying backgrounds, societies and cultures? For people to be held responsible for worshipping the one true God, they all need to have access to knowledge of Him. The final revelation teaches that all humans being have the recognition of the one true God imprinted on their souls as a part of their very nature with which they are created.

In the seventh chapter of the Qur'an (Al-A'raaf, verses 172-173), God explained that when He created Adam He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence and He took a pledge from them saying:

> **"'Am I not your Lord?' To which they all replied, 'Yes, we testify to it'"**

Allah then explained why He had all of mankind bear witness that He is their creator and the only true God worthy of worship. He said:

> **"That was in case you (mankind) should say on the day of Resurrection, 'Verily we were unaware of all this'" [Qur'an 7:172]**

That is to say, we cannot claim on that day that we had no idea that Allah, was our God and that no one told us that we were only supposed to worship Allah alone. Allah went on to further explain that:

> **"It was also in case you should say, 'Certainly it was our ancestors who made partners (with Allah) and we are only their descendants; will you then destroy us for what those liars did?'" [Qur'an 7:173]**

Thus, every child is born with a natural belief in God and an in-born inclination to worship Him alone. This in-born belief and inclination is called in Arabic the "Fitrah".

The Prophet Muhammad reported that Allah said**, "I created my servants in the right religion, but devils made them go astray."** The Prophet also said, **"Each child is born in a state of Fitrah. Then his parents make him a Jew, Christian or a Zoroastrian."** If the child were left alone, he would worship God in his own way, but all children are affected by the environment. So, just as the child submits to the physical laws, which Allah has imposed on nature, in the same way his soul also submits naturally to the fact that Allah is his Lord and Creator. But, if his parents try to make him follow a different path, the child is not strong enough in the early stages of his life to resist or oppose the will of his parents. In such cases, the religion, which the child follows, is one of custom and upbringing, and God does not hold him to account or punish him for his religion up to a certain stage of his life.

The Signs Of God

Throughout people's lives, from childhood until the time they die, signs of the one and only true God are shown to them in all regions of the earth and in their own souls, until it becomes clear that there is only one true God (Allah). God says in the Qur'an:

> **"We will show them our signs In the furthest regions (of the earth) and in their souls, until it becomes clear to them that this is the truth." [Qur'an 41:53]**

The following is an example of God revealing by a sign to one man the error of his idol-worship. In the south-eastern region of the Amazon jungle in Brazil, South America, a primitive tribe erected a new hut to house their man-idol Skwatch, representing the supreme God of all creation. The following day a young man entered the hut to pay homage to the God, and while he was in prostration to what he had been taught was his Creator and Sustainer, a mangy old flea-ridden dog slunk into the hut. The young man looked up in time to see the dog lift his hind leg and pass urine on the idol.

Outraged, the youth chased the dog out of the temple; but when his rage died down he realized that the idol could not be the Lord of the Universe. God must be elsewhere, he concluded. As strange as it may seem, the dog urinated on the idol was a sign from God for that young man. This sign contained the divine message that what he was worshipping was false. It liberated from slavishly following his traditionally learned worship of a false god. As a result, this man was given a choice: either to seek the true god or to continue in the error of his ways.

Allah mentions Prophet Abraham's quest for God as an example of how those who follow His signs will be rightly guided:

> **"So also did we show Abraham the power and the Laws of the heavens and the earth that he might (with understanding) have certitude. When the night covered him over, he saw a star. He said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said: 'I love not those that set' When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: 'This is my Lord.' But when the moon set, he said: 'Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.' When he saw the rising sun in splendor, he said: 'This is my Lord this is the greatest (of all).' But when the sun set, he said; 'O my people I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah" [Qur'an 6:75-79]**

As was mentioned earlier, prophets have been sent to every nation and tribe to support man's natural belief in God and man's in-born inclination to worship Him, as well as to reinforce the divine truth in the daily signs revealed by God. Although much of these prophets' teachings became distorted, portions revealing their God-inspired messages have remained untainted and have served to guide mankind in the choice between right and wrong. The influence of God-inspired messages down through the ages can be seen in the "Ten Commandments" of Judaism's Torah which were later adopted into Christianity's teachings, as well as in the existence of laws against murder, stealing and adultery in most societies throughout the ancient and modern world.

As a result of God's signs to mankind through the ages combined with His revelation through His prophets, all mankind has been given a chance to recognize the one only true God.

Consequently, every soul will be held accountable for its belief in God and its acceptance of the true religion of God, namely Islam, which means total submission to the will of Allah.

Conclusion

The preceding presentation has demonstrated that the name of the religion of Islam expresses Islam's most central principle, submission to God, and that the name "Islam" was chosen not by man, but by God, according to the holy scriptures of Islam. It has also been shown that Islam alone teaches the uniqueness of God and His attributes and enjoins the worship of God alone without intermediaries. Finally, due to the divinely instilled inclination of man to worship God and the signs revealed by God throughout the ages to each individual, Islam may be achieved by all men at all times.

In short, the significance of the name Islam (submission to God), Islam's fundamental acknowledgment of the uniqueness of God and Islam's accessibility to all mankind at all times convincingly support Islam's claim that from the beginning of time in whatever language it was expressed, Islam alone has been, and will be the true religion of God.

In conclusion we ask Allah, the exalted, to keep us on the right path to which He has guided us, and to bestow on us His blessings and mercy, for He is indeed the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be on prophet Muhammad and on all the prophets of God and their righteous followers.